

Johnson, Patrick

From: linda dickens <lindadickens@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2013 9:27 PM
To: District Applications
Subject: Commission application
Attachments: Commission application.pdf

Hi,

Please find attached my application to sit on the redistricting commission.

Linda

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Linda Neavel Dickens
lindadickens@gmail.com

10511

APPLICATION FOR THE INDEPENDENT CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

Please submit your completed application
by email to district.applications@austintexas.gov
by mail or in person to:
Office of the City Auditor
301 W. 2nd Street Suite 2130
Austin, TX 78701

*Application Period:
January 18, 2013
through
February 22, 2013*

**FOR ASSISTANCE WITH INTERPRETING KEY TERMS, SEE THE GLOSSARY
AT THE END OF THIS APPLICATION**

**MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS CAN BE FOUND IN
THE CITY AUDITOR'S INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE AND THE CITY CHARTER
AT WWW.AUSTINTEXAS.GOV/10-ONE**

You must submit an electronic application to district.applications@austintexas.gov
or provide a signed application to the Office of the City Auditor in person or by mail at:

301 W. 2nd Street, Suite 2130

Austin, TX 78701

Submission Deadline: February 22, 2013

DUTIES AND TERMS OF SERVICE

Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission duties include:

1. Conduct duties with integrity and fairness.
2. Conduct an open and transparent process to enable full public consideration of and comment on the drawing of district lines to include an open hearing process.
3. Draw district lines in accordance with specific redistricting criteria in the Charter.
4. Adopt a final redistricting plan and certify the plan to the Austin City Council.
5. Issue a report that explains the basis on which the Commission made its decisions.

Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission Member terms of service include:

1. Members of the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (Commission) will not be compensated for serving, but are eligible to receive reimbursement of reasonable and necessary expenses related to Commission duties. Guidance on what is considered "reasonable and necessary" will be provided by the appropriate authority at a later date.
2. Serve a term of office that expires when the first member of the succeeding Commission is appointed in the year after the next national census is taken.
3. Members of the Commission will be subject to the following restrictions on their future activities:
 - For a period of **10** years beginning from the date that a person is appointed to the Commission, the person **will not** be eligible to be elected to the Austin City Council.
 - For a period of **three** years beginning from the date that a person is appointed to the Commission, the person **may not** hold appointed office for the City of Austin.
 - For a period of **three** years beginning from the date that a person is appointed to the Commission, the person **may not**:
 - Serve as a City employee or as a paid consultant to the City of Austin.
 - Serve as a paid consultant to a member of the City Council in the council member's private capacity; or
 - Receive a non-competitively bid contract with the City of Austin.

APPLICATION FOR THE
INDEPENDENT CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

2013

Please complete this section legibly.

Name of Applicant: Dickens Linda
(Last) (First) (Middle) (Suffix)

Voter Registration Number (VUID): 1139907126

Residence Address (must be a fixed location in the City of Austin):

2801 Macken St. Austin TX 78703
(Street Address) (City) (State) (Zip)

Mailing Address (if different from Residence Address)

(Street Address or PO Box) (City) (State) (Zip)

Contact Phone: 5124619553

Contact Email Address: lindadickens@gmail.com

Spouse's Name: Dickens Kelly
(Last) (First) (Middle) (Suffix)

13-02-22P02:23 RCVD

**APPLICATION FOR THE
INDEPENDENT CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION**

2013

Please check YES or NO by each requirement. If you answer YES to question one (1), you may skip questions four (4) and five (5).

1. Are you a student enrolled in a community college or university in the City of Austin? ☐ Yes ☒ No
2. Do you reside in the City of Austin? ☒ Yes ☐ No
3. Are you registered to vote in the City of Austin? ☒ Yes ☐ No
4. Have you been continuously registered to vote in the City of Austin for the five years immediately preceding the date on which you submit this application? ☒ Yes ☐ No
5. Please indicate whether you voted in the following City of Austin general elections (or corresponding runoff if applicable):

City of Austin General Elections	Candidate Response
May 12, 2012	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
May 14, 2011	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
May 9, 2009	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
May 10, 2008	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
May 13, 2006	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Conflicts of Interest

The information below is required to help the City Auditor identify any conflict of interest you may have.

Within 5 years of the application date, have you or your spouse:	
Been appointed to a state or city office?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Been elected to a state or city office?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Been a candidate for a state or city office?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Served as an officer, employee, or paid consultant of a political party?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Served as an officer, employee, or paid consultant of the campaign committee of a candidate for elective state, county, or city office?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Been a registered state or local lobbyist?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Within 3 years of the application date, have you or your spouse been:	
A paid employee of the City of Austin?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
A person performing paid services under a professional or political contract to the City of Austin or the City Council of the City of Austin?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
A controlling person of a person performing paid services under a professional or political contract to the City of Austin or the City Council of the City of Austin?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
A person performing paid services under a professional or political contract to any member of the City Council of the City of Austin?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
A controlling person of a person performing paid services under a professional or political contract to any member of the City Council of the City of Austin?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
In the last City Election did you or your spouse:	
Contribute or bundle one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more in aggregate to candidates for City of Austin elective office?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Personal Background Information

- Ethnicity: Jewish
- Race: White
- Gender: ☐ Male ☒ Female
- Age: (Please check your response)
☐ 18 to 24 ☐ 25 to 34 ☐ 35 to 44 ☒ 45 to 54 ☐ 55 to 64 ☐ 65+
- Education level: (Please check any that apply)
☐ High School Diploma or GED
☐ Some College (major _____)
☐ Associate's Degree (major _____)
☒ Bachelor's Degree (major English)
☒ Post-Graduate Degree, indicate highest degree attained: (subject Ph.D.: adult and organizational learning)

Qualifications

Please describe your relevant analytical skills.

As I write this, I'm in College Station to attend a conference on assessment in higher education. At a session this morning, several of us were discussing how common it is for people in the field of assessment and institutional effectiveness to have a degree in English, which is what my undergraduate degree is in. I commented that English and assessment both demand extensive analytical skills. From my current role as director of institutional accreditation and program assessment at The University of Texas at Austin going back to my first job teaching swimming lessons when I was 15 years old, I've honed and relied on my ability to make objective and fair observations, evaluate situations, identify multiple perspectives and conclusions, and then help individuals or groups to learn and improve. It seems my entire career has focused on using analysis for improvement.

Currently, I consult with faculty, staff, and administrators on how to improve their programs by assessing learning and evaluating operational effectiveness. I frequently lead workshops and also facilitate strategic planning efforts at the university. Since I work in central administration and often face faculty who are suspicious of and resistant to assessment and change, I've worked hard to earn trust, reduce fear, and make assessment a reasonable, simple, and valuable activity. I know the task is long-term and slow to show wide-spread success, but that complexity is part of what I love about the job. It's not just about assessing learning, but about contributing to a culture of excellence.

Previously, I helped to launch the Master's in Organizational Leadership and Ethics at St. Edward's University, where I also taught critical thinking and research methods. I also provided education and evaluation services for state-funded public health programs for three years, visiting various economically-challenged sites throughout Texas. Additionally, I used to be a management consultant, working primarily for non-profit and state organizations. All of this work has required extensive problem solving, critical thinking, evaluation, negotiation, and influence skills. For many years, I've studied and worked in organizations with the sole purpose of helping to improve their functioning; I have expertise in developing transparent and strategic processes and structures that result in people meeting their goals.

Please describe your ability to be impartial.

There's not a question in my mind about my ability to be impartial as a member of the Citizens' Redistricting Commission. I'm a social scientist and feel strongly that it's my responsibility to help move toward shared understanding and collective values among groups of people. I've received a lot of training in leadership, facilitation, research, communication, teamwork, and change. One of the two major values that I strive to uphold is data-based decision making. It's all too common to make decisions based on anecdote and not evidence; groups and organizations work profoundly smarter when they use evidence. In my work, I set up processes for people to gather information that results in better decisions. The second value that drives me is creating more democracy in the workplace, encouraging environments where people can express themselves. It's important to me to support cultures that allow or encourage all participants to speak up. I sat on the board of my neighborhood association for six years, serving as newsletter editor and vice-president. In both those roles, I tried to not only share my perspectives, but also make room for others to do the same so that many voices could be heard. On a pre-school board of directors, I served as personnel chair and helped to hire and train teachers and the executive director. I completed these tasks fairly.

To answer this question, I suppose you could say that it's not about me being impartial, but rather about my desire to help establish a commission that can act without bias. It's not about me, but about the structure and system. I think that could be a difficult but important challenge with this commission. Establishing ground rules together, having a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and expectations, and defining our purpose and modes of communication can increase impartiality and evidence-based decision making. Agreeing on a decision-making process and holding each other accountable for that can minimize conflict. I am committed to Austin as a livable city, which means that all points of view must be considered with a sense of reasonableness, curiosity, and inquiry.

Please describe your appreciation for the City of Austin's diverse demographics and geography.

When I was in first grade, my parents offered me and my older siblings the opportunity to stay at our neighborhood school or go to a magnet school that was being desegregated in a distant, predominantly African American neighborhood. We elected to go to the magnet school. From that early experience, as one of about six white students (and the only Jewish person) in my class, I've appreciated diversity. My own children now attend a school that has a significant cultural mix, with students from many different neighborhoods in our city. My husband and I chose to raise our family in Austin because of this diversity—we want them to experience the richness of being with people from all walks of life. We're so committed to it that we've hosted foreign exchange students (from Germany and China) for three years.

At UT Austin, I've been able to work with a wide range of faculty and staff from across the globe who have chosen to make Austin their home. In the past couple of years, I've led strategic planning for three groups: the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, a 350-person unit that strengthens university-community relationships; the Center for Asian American Studies, which gave me insight into the growing Asian population in Austin; and for UT Elementary, which serves as a demonstration school for under-served families in East Austin. Working with these units, as well as others, has instilled both an appreciation for the challenges they face and a commitment to help find solutions.

People from a wide range of cultures move to Austin; approaching a majority-minority, the city seems to make room for them all socially and economically. High tech. . . education. . . food. . . music. . . business. . . the many strong sectors of Austin pull in people with varied interests and abilities. One of the things I appreciate about Austin is the fact that people are free to fully express themselves and contribute to the civic fabric to the extent that they want. The myriad volunteer opportunities make it easy to get involved in the community. And the many festivals, like the East Austin Studio Tour and Carnaval Brasileiro also bring out all kinds of interesting people.

With the growing population, Austin has been at risk of urban sprawl, and the city leaders have begun finding ways to create a more compact geography. As this trend continues, it is my hope that central Austin reflects a diverse mix of residents. The urban core tends toward professional, young adults; over time, perhaps this will change to include more families and mixed income residents. Having multiple districts can acknowledge the diversity while also offering a means to integrate.

The potential for 10-1 is that the system results in a stronger, strategic, and inclusive city while also providing more of what residents need: understanding and representation of diverse issues. With their own council representative, the residents in the 10 districts will be better served and heard. And they also may feel more motivated to participate, thus providing greater impact on city policies and future directions. Systems with diversity and multiple views always are stronger and more sustainable because they have more energy. The districts will offer the chance for different perspectives to come together to build a more unified city.

Please provide any other information you wish to be considered during the selection of the most qualified applicants for the Commission.

As a rule, I vote in every election. I think there was one, however, when I planned my time poorly and wasn't able to make it to the polls on voting day. I'm not sure which election that was, but it may have occurred one of those years posted on page 3.

As a 32-year resident of Austin, I've seen significant changes in the city. And with three generations of 16 family members living in different neighborhoods throughout the city, I am committed to helping it continue to find ways that work for all residents.

DISCLAIMER

By submitting this application, I understand that I am giving the City Auditor permission to release my information to the public. In particular, I affirmatively consent to the release of the contact email address I have provided.

If I am appointed, my address, contact phone number and contact email address will be included on the City of Austin's website.

I understand my application is public information under the Texas Public Information Act. The information will be kept according to the City Auditor's records retention policies.

I understand that my participation on the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission is voluntary.

I understand the duties and terms of service for the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission as described above.

Under penalty of law, I swear or affirm that the preceding information in this application is in all things true and correct.

Linda Dickens

Signature of Applicant

2/21/2013

Date

If submitting electronically, please type your full name in the signature box.

GLOSSARY

- “Bundle” means to raise money as an intermediary for a council candidate by soliciting contributions on the candidate’s behalf.
- “Campaign committee” in regard to an “officer, employee or paid consultant of a campaign committee” means a candidate or a specific purpose political committee supporting or opposing a candidate.
- “Candidate” for elective office means a person whose name appeared on a ballot, or who was a declared write-in candidate, in a general or primary election. It does not mean a person who merely announced a candidacy or only filed campaign finance filings. This definition attempts to construe the term against ineligibility, avoid ambiguity and disputes of fact, and use the term in the way most commonly understood by a lay person.
- “City” means Austin.
- “City elective office” means the office of mayor and city council member.
- “City employee” means an employee on the City payroll, including a temporary or part-time employee. The term does not include an independent contractor. This definition follows the definition in Section 2-7-2 of the City Code.
- “City office,” with respect to appointment, means a municipal court judgeship (including a substitute judgeship), and membership on a commission, committee, board, task force, or other City body appointed by the mayor or the city council. This definition follows the definition of “city official” in Section 2-7-2 of the City Code, excluding those City officials who are covered separately as City employees.
- “Community college or university in the City of Austin” means a degree-granting post-secondary educational institution, accredited by a recognized accrediting agency under the Education Code, that grants one or more of the following: an associate’s degree, a bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree, or a doctorate, and that regularly conducts classes where the instructor and two or more students are physically present in a physical location within Austin’s city limits.
- “Contribution,” for purposes of calculating aggregate contributions to candidates for City elective office, includes all contributions to candidates for mayor and city council, and contributions to specific purpose political committees supporting or opposing those candidates.
- “County” refers to a county in which the City of Austin has territory.
- “County elective office” means an office that is voted on county-wide or an office that is voted on by the voters of a precinct drawn by a commissioners court.
- “Employee” with respect to a political party or campaign committee means a person who was paid a salary by the political party or campaign committee.
- “Local lobbyist” means a person required to register under Chapter 4-8 of the City Code.
- “Non-competitively bid contract” means a contract which must be awarded as provided in Section 252.043 of the Local Government Code (“lowest responsible bidder” or “best value for the municipality”).

- “Officer” with respect to the “campaign committee of a candidate for elective state, county or city office” means:
 - the campaign treasurer of a candidate for an elective state, county, or city office;
 - the campaign treasurer of a specific purpose political committee that supported or opposed a candidate for an elective state, county, or city office; or
 - an officer or director of an incorporated specific purpose political committee, incorporated for liability purposes only under Section 253.092 of the Texas Election Code, that supported or opposed a candidate for an elective state, county, or city office.
- “Officer” with respect to a political party means a precinct chair, a county chair, or a member of a party executive committee under Title 10 of the Texas Election Code.
- “Paid Consultant” with respect to work done for a political party or campaign committee means a person who was paid monetary consideration for providing legal services, accounting services, public relations services, statistical or polling services, or political or campaign-related services or advice.
- “Paid Consultant” with respect to the three year ban on paid consultancy with a council member, means having a “political or professional contract” with a council member as defined in this guidance.
- “Political or professional contract,” in the context of a contract with a council member, means a contract with a council member under which, in return for consideration, a person provided expert advice or personal services related to a council member's duties or to the council member's service as a council member, or provided advice about the conduct of campaign activities or holding office, or provided services to a council member that would be reportable on the council member's required campaign and officeholder filings under Title 15 of the Texas Election Code; Article III, §8 of the Austin City Charter; or Chapter 2-2 of the Austin City Code. This does not include a contract solely for the sale of goods.
- “Political party” means a political party that appeared on the ballot in any of the last three general elections for state and county officers.
- “Professional contract,” in the context of a contract with the City means a non-competitively bid contract other than a contract solely for the sale of goods.
- “State” means Texas.
- “State office” means an office held by a “state officer” as defined in Section 572.002 of the Government Code.
 - In the context of an appointment to a state office, “state office” means: the office of Secretary of State, an office of a state agency subject to appointment for a term of office specified by the Texas Constitution or a statute of this state; an office subject to appointment with the advice and consent of the senate; the position of executive head of a state agency; or a state office subject to election but filled by appointment because of a vacancy or because the office is newly created.
 - In the context of candidacy or election to a state office, “state office” means a seat in the legislature, an executive or judicial office filled in a statewide election; a judgeship of a court of appeals or of a district court; membership on the State Board of Education; or the position of district attorney or criminal district attorney.
- “Student” means a person actively enrolled in a community college or university on the date of the person’s application to the Commission.

